



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the left.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid license, International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle documents and proof of insurance. An IDP must be acquired prior to arrival in the country. If staying longer than three months, a local driver's license is required.
- ❑ Visitors should carry identification at all times. Authorities may erect security checkpoints along roads.
- ❑ The US dollar is the official currency. Credit cards are generally not accepted.
- ❑ ATMs in the capital city of Dili accept bank cards issued in the US, but machines are frequently out of order.
- ❑ Avoid travel after dark. Road lighting is poor or non-existent.
- ❑ Many fatal crashes involve motorcycles and motorbikes.
- ❑ Hiring a driver and limousine through a reputable hotel or tourism agency is recommended.
- ❑ Women should not walk alone. Unaccompanied women are subject to verbal and physical harassment including groping. Gender-based violence is common.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.05 g/dl for all drivers.
- ❑ There are 14.1 road deaths per 100,000 people in Timor-Leste, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving standards** are generally poor; reckless road behavior is common.
- **Drivers** of larger vehicles often assume right-of-way over smaller vehicles.
- **Most drivers** operate vehicles with steering wheels on the right-hand side, despite the country being left-side drive; this limits driver visibility, particularly on curves and at intersections.
- **Motorists** and motorcycle drivers frequently fail to use headlights at night.
- **The majority** of motorists are uninsured.
- **Pedestrians** often walk in or along roads, and may be difficult to see at night.
- **Street vendors** on sidewalks often block access for pedestrians, forcing people to walk in roadways.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **Of the 6,040 km (3,753 miles)** of roads, 2,600 km (1,615 miles) are paved and 3,440 km (2,137 miles) are unpaved.
- **Roads are** frequently in poor condition with deep potholes. In some areas, large sections of pavement have bucked from earthquake and flood damage.
- **Beyond main** roads in the capital, most streets are unpaved. Four-wheel drive vehicles are necessary in many areas.
- **Many** main roads are single-lane mountain tracks that become impassable after rain.
- **Road directions** and traffic signs are lacking. GPS navigation systems are often unreliable. Carry an up-to-date paper map. Maps are available at the Tourist Information Center on Rua Avenida de Portugal in Dili.
- **Avoid all** public gatherings and demonstrations, which may become violent.
- **During** periods of civil unrest or gang conflicts, rocks may be thrown or darts fired from slingshots at passing cars.
- **Political conditions** are unstable. Military operations may commence at any time. Remain vigilant and leave the area immediately should activity begin.
- **There is** ongoing gang conflict between armed martial arts groups, particularly in Dili.
- **Beyond** the capital city, driving in a convoy of at least two vehicles is recommended.
- **Power** outages are common.
- **Mobile phone** connections are unpredictable, and may be unavailable beyond Dili.
- **Pedestrians are** at high risk. Infrastructure is lacking. People must often share busy streets with large motorized vehicles.
- **Loose animals** are common on roads.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **Cross-island** roads are often in poor condition with broken surfaces, or sections that are washed away.



Road Conditions, continued

- Roads sustain continued damage during the rainy season. Routes through the mountainous areas of Aileu, Ermera, Manatuto, Ainaro and Manufahi districts are particularly susceptible.
- » **The road** running on either side of the southernmost bridge in Dili, including the intersection near the supermarket heading east toward the Palm Business Center, is the location of ongoing martial arts gang activity. Fighting between these groups includes rocks or other objects being thrown at passing cars. Do not approach this intersection at night. Drive with windows up and doors locked.
- » **Pedestrians should avoid** Comoro Market and the surrounding area in Dili, particularly at night. The area is poorly lit and subject to crime including assault. Street vendors block sidewalks, forcing those on foot to walk in busy streets with fast-moving motorized traffic.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Timor-Leste** is subject to frequent seismic events, tsunamis, monsoons and torrential rains.
- **Earthquakes** may strike at any time. Tsunamis may occur after earthquake activity.
- **Monsoon season** is generally from November/December to April. Flash floods and landslides may follow heavy rain.
- **During** heavy rains, roads may become impassable and bridges washed away.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, taxis, buses, minibuses (often called “mikrolet”), motor scooters and boats.
- **All forms** of public transportation are regarded as unsafe.
- **Minibuses and minivans** provide public transportation in cities and some larger towns, but generally do not operate after dark.
- **Buses** and minibuses are usually overcrowded and in poor condition.
- **Smaller towns** and villages are generally without public transport.
- **Full-size** buses connect most main urban areas.
- **Minibuses** follow specific routes. Vehicles are numbered and color-coded.
- **There are** two kinds of taxis: yellow and blue.
- **Yellow taxis** are unmetered. Agree on fare before entering vehicle.
- **Blue taxis** in Dili and some cities are generally metered.
- **Taxi travel** carries risks. Assaults against passengers have occurred. Women should not use taxis if traveling alone, particularly after dark.
- **Taxi vehicles** may be in poor condition and lack standard safety features including seat belts.
- **Taxis** may not be available at night.
- **Book blue taxis** through a reputable hotel or tourist agency, and travel only during daytime.
- **Bicycles** may be used for transportation. Infrastructure is lacking. There are no cycling paths.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	50 kph (30 mph)
Rural roads	90 kph (56 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

			
Example of city limit sign	Example of street sign	Children in area	Twisting road



Transportation, continued

- **There are** many motorcycles and motorbikes. Drivers often disregard traffic safety rules.
- **Limited** rideshares operated by taxi companies are available in Dili. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **There are** frequent ferry disasters. Safety standards are poor among boat operators. If it is necessary to travel by boat, ensure that there are adequate numbers of lifeboats and life preservers. Bring your own life preserver for added safety.
- **Do not** board vessels that appear to be overcrowded or unseaworthy, and do not travel by boat during inclement weather or rough seas.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age; to rent a car,

drivers must be a minimum of 21 years old. Some rental agencies may have additional restrictions.

- **Seat belt** use is compulsory for drivers and passengers. Enforcement is low.
- **Children** younger than 12 years may not sit in front seats of vehicles.
- **Helmet use** is mandatory for motorcycle and motorbike drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened and meet national standards.
- **Children are not** restricted from being passengers on motorcycles or motorbikes.
- **At intersections**, vehicles approaching from the left have right-of-way.
- **Vehicles** entering a roundabout have right-of-way over existing traffic.
- **Overtaking** is allowed only on the right, and is prohibited on curves or areas with reduced visibility.

Dili (Capital)

- » Located on the northern coast. Highways link the city to the border of Indonesia at Mota’ain near Batugade; and to the town of Baucau. Not all sections of these roads are in good condition.
- » There is a high level of crime, which may affect motorists and pedestrians. Gang activity includes throwing rocks and stones at passing vehicles.
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, buses, minibuses (often called “mikrolets”), motorbikes and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. Roads are in poor condition and traffic signs are lacking.
- » There are large numbers of motorcycles and motorbikes. Drivers may disregard traffic rules.
- » All public transportation is regarded as unsafe.
- » Public transport includes minibuses and minivans. There is no service at night.
- » Minibuses and buses are overcrowded and in poor condition.
- » Minibuses are numbered, color-coded and follow set routes.
- » Minibus fares are paid in cash when exiting the vehicle.
- » Routes with full-size buses are available to some other towns and large urban areas.
- » Taxis include yellow and blue vehicles. Blue taxis are generally metered; yellow taxis are unmetered. Agree on fare before entering vehicle.
- » Blue taxis should be booked through a reputable hotel or tourist agency, and used only during daytime.
- » Assaults against taxi passengers by drivers have occurred. Women should not use taxis, particularly after dark.
- » Many taxi vehicles are in poor condition and lack standard safety features including seat belts.
- » Taxis are generally unavailable at night; when available, fares increase after dark.
- » Pedestrians are at risk. Infrastructure is lacking.
- » In areas with street markets blocking sidewalks, pedestrians are forced to walk in busy roads.
- » Bicycles are sometimes used for transportation. There is a lack of infrastructure, including cycling paths.
- » There are large numbers of motorcycles and motorbikes. Drivers are often reckless.
- » Limited rideshares operated by taxi companies are available. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.



Dili, continued

- » Ferry disasters are common. Vessels are operated by multiple companies, and safety practices are poor. If it is necessary to travel by boat, ensure that there are adequate numbers of lifeboats and life preservers. Bring your own life preserver for added safety.
- » Do not board vessels that appear to be overcrowded or unseaworthy, and do not travel by boat during inclement weather or rough seas.
- » Presidente Nicolau Lobato International Airport is about 6 km (3.7 miles) from the city.
- » Taxis provide transport between the airport and the city.
- » Some hotels may offer shuttles to and from the airport. Some private shuttles are available for booking in advance, including FlyBus and Green Path Transfers.
- » A limited selection of rental car agencies are represented at the airport. Check condition of vehicle carefully before signing agreement, and verify working safety features including seat belts, headlights, taillights, turn signals, brakes and good tires. Note that most rental vehicles are right-hand drive.

Baucau

- » Second-largest urban area. The city is located on the northern coast, about 123 km (76.4 miles) from Dili.
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, buses, minibuses (often called “mikrolets”), motorbikes and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. There are few signs. Road surfaces are in poor condition with deep potholes.
- » Traffic includes large numbers of motorcycles and motorbikes. Drivers may be reckless and disregard traffic rules.
- » Public transportation is regarded as unsafe.
- » Minibuses and minivans generally do not operate after dark.
- » Long-distance buses arrive and depart from Kota Baru (New Town) at the roundabout near the marketplace.
- » Buses and minibuses are usually overcrowded and in poor condition.
- » Minibuses are numbered and color-coded. Vehicles follow specific routes.
- » Taxis include yellow and blue cars. Blue taxis are generally metered and yellow taxis are unmetered. Agree on fare before entering vehicle.
- » Taxi travel is dangerous, particularly for women. Assaults against passengers have occurred; women travelers should not use taxis, particularly after dark.
- » Many taxis are in poor condition and lack standard safety features including seat belts.
- » Unless arranged in advance, taxis are not available at night.
- » If taxi travel is required, book blue taxis through a reputable hotel or tourist agency, and travel only during the day.
- » Rideshares are unavailable.
- » Pedestrian infrastructure is lacking. Pedestrians must walk in busy roads in areas with street markets.
- » Bicycles are sometimes used for transportation. Infrastructure is lacking. There are no cycling paths.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **There are no** laws mandating access to transportation, communications or public buildings for persons with mobility, sensory or other challenges. Most public places and public transportation are inaccessible.
- **Sidewalks** and footpaths frequently have uneven, broken surfaces and deep, wide gutters which may be uncovered. Wheelchair ramps may not be available.
- **Many buildings** lack elevators and wheelchair-accessible doorways.
- **In general**, rest rooms, road crossings and tourist areas are not equipped to accommodate persons with mobility, sensory or other challenges.



EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
- **Responders** to emergency numbers and hospital medical personnel may not speak English.
- **Emergency numbers:**
 - » Police: 331 1380
 - » Ambulance: 331 1044
 - » Fire: 331 0340
 - » General emergencies: 110
- **Responses** to emergencies are often slow. Beyond Dili, ambulances are generally unavailable.
- **Limited emergency** medical services are available in Dili. Stamford Medical Clinic is the main healthcare facility; most emergencies are treated at Dili National Hospital. These facilities are limited.
- **Quality** of medical care varies widely throughout the country.
- **Payment** in cash is generally required prior to the administration of medical care.
- **In the event** of serious injury or illness, evacuation to Australia, Singapore or another country is required; options may be limited due to a lack of available flights in and out of the country.
- **Medications** are scarce, and are limited to basic medicines.
- **Some medications** prescribed in other countries may be illegal in Timor-Leste. Check legality prior to travel, and carry all medications in their original packaging accompanied by a written doctor's prescription.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police.
 - » Drivers who are perceived to be at fault by passers-by may be attacked. Large crowds often gather at crash sites and may become violent; if unsafe conditions exist, drive to the nearest police station or stay in vehicle with windows up and doors locked.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

Disclaimer: ASIRT provides this information as a service to travelers. This Road Safety Review is intended to provide general guidelines for travelers to countries around the world. Any electronic links provided in this Report are for illustrative purposes and ASIRT is not responsible for the content provided within these electronic links and/or videos.

Copyright: Purchasers of this Road Safety Review are entitled to use it for purposes of research, education, information on health, safety and general road and traffic conditions or other non-commercial uses. Neither the whole nor any part of this ASIRT Road Safety Review may be copied in any form or provided to any other party without the prior written consent of the copyright owner. Flag images are © Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

To order more copies or to order Road Safety Reviews for other countries please contact:

Association for Safe International Road Travel, 11769 Gainsborough Road, Potomac, MD 20854 USA,

Phone: 1-240-249-0100; Email: asirt@asirt.org; Website: www.asirt.org; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASIRT.org/>